

The ethics of the earlier thinkers



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PHILOSOPHY It is a question that has troubled billions of people since the dawn of time: how should a person lead a good, meaningful life? There are as many theories as there are grains of sand on the beach, but some ideas over the years have been more popular than others. Some people are born into religions where these questions are largely answered for them. They know from an early age what their god tells them is the right thing to do and what is the wrong thing. Others question their faith and try to revise their morality, bringing in parts of other religions or philosophies. Still others have no real faith and try to build a moral foundation out of their personal experience adding rules and content to it as the years go by. Some philosophers have talked of two worlds existing. One the world we live in and another better, more perfect world that exists somewhere else. This way of thinking is also the foundation of much theological thought too.

Plato, like Descartes, believed that the mind and the soul were basically the same thing. However, unlike Descartes, Plato thought that the soul was eternal and didn't with the body but changed its form and shape, as it was a kind of opposite. One of Plato's most important concepts was his belief in the existence of two worlds: one a world of real things that we can see and one a world of forms, or perfect representations of these things. Plato was always about duality, both in objects and forms, but also in body and soul. For example, a spoon would exist on your table, but also somewhere else as a kind of perfect spoon. The same idea would apply to things like colours or animals. Homer, too, shared this idea. He saw the world as divided between mortals and gods. But for him it was possible to cross over between the worlds. Odysseus, for example, was able to visit the Underworld; Achilles was half-god and half-man. This concept was also shared by Aquinas, but

somewhat less imaginatively. He believed that God was perfect and that we are but a shadow cast by this perfection.

There is so much to write about when it comes to this subject. Morality is all around us and affects everything we do, all of our actions and all of our interpersonal relationships. Our lives are also determined by our view of the division of the world and the possible existence of God. This has been a popular concept throughout history, even if it has been overcome by ideas such as moral relativism in today's world. For those reasons, it is very important to study and think about. I personally do not believe in absolutism or in relativism. I like to think there is a moral ground where people can live happy lives and have evolved from ideas they once had. That said, I think being too open-minded can also cause problems. Overall, though, people should be able to make up their own minds.